



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT NOMINATES MARISA NOVARA FOR COMMISSIONER OF HOUSING

Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today nominated Marisa Novara for Commissioner of Housing for the City of Chicago and submitted her appointment for City Council approval. Novara, who served as a policy director for the Mayor's transition team, will be leaving her role as Vice President of the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC).

"It is our responsibility to ensure that every Chicagoan has access to a quality, affordable home," said Mayor Lightfoot. "I can think of no one more qualified than Marisa Novara to carry out this critical work. Her experience spearheading policies that drive equity in neighborhood development will be a huge asset as Chicago works to provide needed housing preservation, development and renovation in every neighborhood."

In her role at the Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC), Novara oversaw the *Cost of Segregation* project, a 2017 study which estimated that the Chicago region's economy is suppressed because of the level of segregation present. The project concluded that the economy could grow by \$4.4 billion if decades-old patterns of discrimination in housing and transportation were addressed, and access to jobs and education were improved. She also led a follow-up report detailing solutions for a more equitable city, *Our Equitable Future roadmap*.

"I am honored to be considered by Mayor Lightfoot and the City Council to serve as Commissioner for the Department of Housing, and to work to ensure all of our communities have access to affordable housing options," said Novara. "Throughout my career I have worked to both create quality affordable housing and enact good public policy that increases access to housing while addressing issues of systemic racial inequity experienced in many of our Chicago communities. I look forward to the opportunity to continue this important work that will drive growth and sustainable futures for every neighborhood."



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Through the *Cost of Segregation* project, Novara advanced the first argument with evidence in the United States of what racial and economic segregation costs a region and led the subsequent creation of the region's first comprehensive guide to a more racially equitable future. Marisa's writing has been published by the *Chicago Tribune*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Huffington Post*, *Crain's Chicago Business*, *Next City*, the American Planning Association and Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies. Her research has been featured in the *Economist*, *New York Times*, *CNN*, *Forbes*, *Ebony*, *Bloomberg View*, *The Atlantic's CityLab*, *Curbed*, *Planetizen*, *Chicago magazine*, *Chicago Reader*, National Public Radio, NPR's Code Switch and Chicago Public Radio.

Prior to joining MPC, Novara directed affordable rental and for-sale housing development for Lawndale Christian Development Corporation in the North Lawndale community, where she lived and worked for over a decade. She received a master's degree in urban planning from the Instituto Politecnico di Milano in Milan, Italy, and a master's degree from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration.

Previously organized under the Department of Planning & Development for over a decade, the Department of Housing oversees the development of new housing, monitors compliance with the Affordable Requirements Ordinance (ARO), administers homeownership programs and grants, and develops housing and community development policy. Its initiatives also serve owners needing repairs, rehab and tax relief, and developers seeking new housing opportunities in local communities.

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